

## ***Lake Washington Interim Fish Consumption Advisory***

### ***Why is there an interim fish consumption advisory for Lake Washington?***

Results from a recent study evaluating bioaccumulation of contaminants through the Lake Washington food web indicate that PCB concentrations in large northern pikeminnow longer than 12 inches are some of the highest levels recorded in Washington State. Other species that have elevated PCB concentrations were large yellow perch greater than 10 ½ inches and large cutthroat trout greater than 12 inches. These high levels of PCBs prompted the Washington State Department of Health to issue an interim fish consumption advisory.

Five fish species (cutthroat trout, northern pikeminnow, yellow perch, smallmouth bass, and sockeye salmon) were collected and analyzed for four contaminants chlordane, DDT, mercury, and PCBs. The study was carried out by King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks and the University of Washington School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences.

Prior to the issuance of this interim advisory, a statewide fish consumption advisory for largemouth and smallmouth bass due to mercury was in place throughout fresh water bodies in Washington State, including Lake Washington.

### ***Where do the PCBs and mercury in Lake Washington come from?***

PCBs are a family of human-made, chlorinated chemical compounds that were once used in a variety of products such as coolants and lubricants in transformers, capacitors, electrical equipment, old fluorescent lighting fixtures, and hydraulic oils. Commercial production of PCBs was halted in 1977 because of concerns about its toxicity and inability to break down to a safe substance in the environment. Elevated levels of PCBs have been found in sediment samples around combined sewage overflows.

Mercury levels found in the lake are due to natural

and human activities. Industrial activities such as burning wastes in municipal incinerators and emissions from industrial plants release mercury into the air, which then makes its way into waterbodies and oceans.

### ***Where is Lake Washington?***

Lake Washington is located in King County and is directly east of Seattle, WA. The public uses the lake extensively for fishing, swimming, and boating.



### ***What part of Lake Washington is affected by the advisory?***

The entire lake is affected by this advisory. Certain species of fish now have consumption limits: northern pikeminnow, yellow perch, cutthroat trout, and largemouth and smallmouth bass

### ***Can I still eat fish from Lake Washington?***

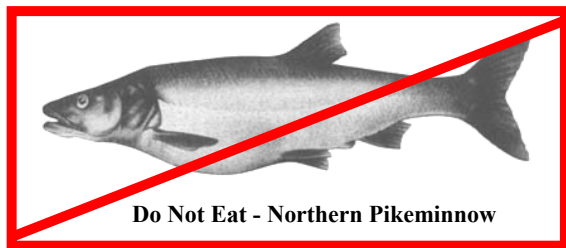
Yes, you can still catch and eat fish from any part of the lake where fishing is allowed. Sockeye salmon is a good choice because it is low in contaminants. See the following recommendations about what fish you can and cannot eat from Lake Washington.

### ***Fish Consumption Recommendations:***

These recommendations apply to anyone who eats fish from Lake Washington especially women of childbearing age and young children.

#### **✓ DO NOT EAT**

##### **Northern pikeminnow “Squawfish”**



#### **✓ OK to Eat- but limit your meals\* per month**

These fish are good to eat in moderation. Remember to consume younger, smaller fish. They have fewer contaminants than older, larger fish.

**\* 1 meal = 8 ounces**

##### **Yellow perch**

- Larger than 10 ½ inches eat 1 meal per month.
- Smaller than 10 ½ inches eat 4 meals per month.



##### **Cutthroat trout**

- Larger than 12 inches eat 1 meal per month.
- Smaller than 12 inches eat 3 meals per month.



##### **Large and smallmouth bass**

- 2 meals per month.



#### **✓ Good to Eat**

##### **Sockeye salmon**

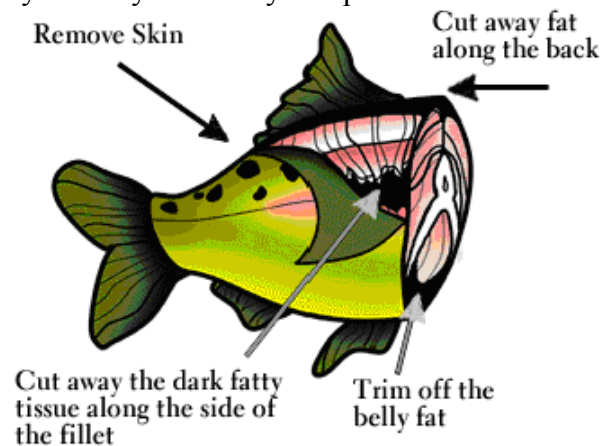
- Choose sockeye salmon when choosing fish from Lake Washington. There are no meal limits.

##### **Eat a variety of fish as part of a balanced diet**

- The American Heart Association recommends two fish meals per week.

### ***How can I reduce PCBs in my body?***

By reducing your exposure you can reduce PCBs in your body. Remember to prepare your fish this way to reduce you and your family's exposure to PCBs:



Cook fish on a rack so the juices and fat will drip off. Do not eat the juices, bones, organs, fat, or skin.

#### **To reduce your exposure even more:**

- ✓ Eat a variety of fish that are low in contaminants.
- ✓ Remember to consume younger, smaller fish.
- ✓ If you eat more than the recommended amount of fish in a month, eat less the next month.

#### ***Are these contaminants a reason to stop eating fish?***

No. Fish is good for you. Although some kinds of seafood have too much mercury and PCBs, others have very little. By varying the kinds of fish in your diet and following these guidelines, you can help protect your health and enjoy all the benefits of fish.

#### ***Health Benefits of Fish***

Continue eating fish because fish is good for you. Remember this about fish:

- Fish is an excellent low fat food, a great source of protein, vitamins, and minerals.
- The oils in fish are important for unborn and breastfed babies.
- Eating a variety of fish helps to reduce your chances of stroke or heart attack.
- A diet that includes fish every week can help lower your risk for heart disease.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS  
FISH ADVISORY PLEASE CALL THE DOH  
AT TOLL-FREE: 1-877-485-7316**

[www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/oehas/EHA\\_fish\\_adv.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/oehas/EHA_fish_adv.htm)